



## U.S. ramps up Ukraine warning, says Russia may invade in days

By M. LEE, A. MADHANI and V. ISACHENKOV  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Biden administration on Friday escalated its dire warnings about a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, saying it could take place within days, even as emergency diplomatic efforts continued. Adding to the sense of crisis, officials said Biden ordered another 3,000 U.S. troops to Poland.

The White House said it still didn't know if Russian President Vladimir Putin had made a decision to invade, but it said Putin has assembled all the elements to do so quickly and told Americans in Ukraine to leave within the next 48 hours. The stark warning accelerated the projected timeframe for a potential invasion, which many analysts have believed was unlikely until after the Winter Olympics in China end on Feb. 20. The heightened U.S. rhetoric followed new intelligence that showed another increase in Russian troops near the Ukrainian border and the start of a major Russian military exercise in neighboring Belarus.

"We can't pinpoint the day at this point, and we can't pinpoint the hour, but that is a very, very distinct possibility," President Joe Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. "The strong possibility of action, the distinct possibility of action, in a relatively near term time frame ... is backed up by our view of what's happening on the ground."



White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan gives an update about Ukraine during a press briefing at the White House, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022, in Washington.

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Associated Press

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# U.S. ramps up Ukraine warning, says Russia may invade in days

Continued from Front

"We continue to see signs of Russian escalation, including new forces arriving at the Ukrainian border," he added. "As we've said before, we are in the window when an invasion could begin at any time should Vladimir Putin decide to order it."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova retorted immediately: "The hysteria of the White House is more indicative than ever. The Anglo-Saxons need a war. At any cost. Provocations, misinformation and threats are a favorite method of solving their own problems."

Biden has said U.S. troops will not enter Ukraine to contest any Russian invasion, but he has bolstered the U.S. military presence in Europe as reassurance to allies on NATO's eastern flank. On Friday the Pentagon said Biden ordered a further 3,000 soldiers to Poland, on top of 1,700 who are on their way there. Together they form an infantry brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is currently in Australia, was the first senior U.S. official to say publicly that an invasion could come before the end of the Olympics.

Repeating Blinken's earlier caution to U.S. citizens in Ukraine, Sullivan said: "The risk is high enough and the threat is now immediate enough that prudence demands that it is the time to leave now."

Sullivan would not discuss the details of the intelligence behind the new U.S. assessment and denied a report that American officials believe Putin has made the decision to invade. But he said the situation is increasingly fragile and that the U.S. and its allies must be prepared.

"We believe he very well may give the final 'go order'," Sullivan said. "That is a very distinct possibility. It may well happen soon."

Biden spoke to a number of European leaders on Friday to underscore the con-



**A Ukrainian tank moves during military drills close to Kharkiv, Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022.**  
**Associated Press**

cerns raised by U.S. intelligence about the potential imminence of a Russian invasion. Sullivan said the Western leaders were completely united and would respond harshly to a Russian invasion with devastating economic and trade sanctions. Britain's defense secretary, meanwhile, was visiting Moscow in another effort to ease tensions over a possible invasion. Ben Wallace's trip came a day after British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss held frosty negotiations in Moscow to urge Russia to pull back over 100,000 troops near Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov characterized that meeting in blunt and scathing terms, calling it a "conversation between deaf and dumb."

Russia opened massive war games in Belarus on Thursday that are due to run through next weekend but says it has no plans to invade Ukraine. It wants the West to keep Ukraine and other former Soviet countries out of NATO. It also wants NATO to refrain from deploying weapons there and to roll back alliance

forces from Eastern Europe — demands flatly rejected by the West.

Speaking at the start of his talks with Wallace, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu noted that "the military-political situation in Europe is growing increasingly tense, and it's not our fault." Shoigu noted that shipments of weapons to Ukraine by the U.S., Britain and other allies have contributed to the tensions and pointed to the recent deployment of British soldiers to Ukraine, asking why they were sent and how long they will stay.

Speaking to reporters after the talks, Wallace noted that the anti-tank missiles that Britain sent to Ukraine were defensive tactical weapons that do not pose a threat to any neighbor unless it invades.

He said British troops deployed to Ukraine to help train its military to use the British weapons and will leave "pretty soon" after they accomplish that mission.

Wallace described the talks as "constructive and frank" and noted his Russian counterpart's assurances

that Moscow has no intention to attack Ukraine. But he also emphasized that the concentration of Russian troops near Ukrainian territory is clearly "beyond normal exercising."

He reaffirmed that a Russian invasion would have "tragic consequences" and emphasized the need to maintain contacts between military forces to prevent incidents.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba again played down the U.S. advice to Americans to leave, saying that Washington has made similar calls before. He noted that the situation remains volatile.

Continuing its military buildup near Ukraine, Russia has moved six amphibious assault vessels into the Black Sea, augmenting its capability to land marines on the coast. Moscow has announced sweeping drills in the Black and Azov seas in the coming days and closed large areas for commercial shipping, drawing a strong protest from Ukraine on Thursday.

Kuleba voiced hope that the West would react to the Russian move, saying

that "we have engaged our partners to prepare a coordinated response."

Russia's troop concentration includes forces deployed on the territory of its ally Belarus for massive joint drills involving firing live ammunition. Those exercises entered a decisive phase Thursday and will run through Feb. 20. The Ukrainian capital is about 75 kilometers (47 miles) south of the Belarus border.

NATO has stepped up military deployments to bolster its eastern flank, with the U.S. sending troops to Poland and Romania.

The U.S. Navy said Thursday that it has deployed four destroyers from the United States to European waters. The Navy did not directly tie this deployment to the Ukraine crisis but said the ships provide "additional flexibility" to the U.S. Sixth Fleet commander, whose area of responsibility includes the Mediterranean, and will operate in support of NATO allies.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg visited a military base in Romania, hailing the ongoing deployment of additional U.S. troops. "This is a powerful demonstration of trans-Atlantic unity," Stoltenberg said.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova responded by noting that "NATO keeps building up its presence near Russia's borders and exacerbates the situation around Ukraine to create a pretext for that."

Russia and Ukraine have been locked in a bitter conflict since 2014, when Ukraine's Kremlin-friendly leader was driven from office by a popular uprising. Moscow responded by annexing Crimea and then backing a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine, where fighting has killed over 14,000 people.

A 2015 peace deal brokered by France and Germany helped halt large-scale battles, but regular skirmishes have continued, and efforts to reach a political settlement have stalled. □



## Senators: CIA has secret program that collects American data

By **NOMAAN MERCHANT**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The CIA has a secret, undisclosed data repository that includes information collected about Americans, two Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee said. While neither the agency nor lawmakers would disclose specifics about the data, the senators alleged the CIA had long hidden details about the program from the public and Congress.

Sens. Ron Wyden of Oregon and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico sent a letter to top intelligence officials calling for more details about the program to be declassified. Large parts of the letter, which was sent in April 2021 and declassified Thursday, and documents released by the CIA were blacked out. Wyden and Heinrich said the program operated “outside the statutory framework that Congress and the public believe govern this collection.”

There have long been concerns about what information the intelligence community collects domestically, driven in part by previous violations of Americans’ civil liberties. The CIA and National Security Agency have a foreign mission and are generally barred from



This April 13, 2016, photo, shows the seal of the Central Intelligence Agency at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va.

investigating Americans or U.S. businesses. But the spy agencies’ sprawling collection of foreign communications often snares Americans’ messages and data incidentally.

Intelligence agencies are required to take steps to protect U.S. information, including redacting the names of any Americans from reports unless they are deemed relevant to an investigation. The process of removing redactions is known as “unmasking.”

The CIA on Friday said the

program highlighted by the senators and another disclosed this week are “repositories of information about the activities of foreign governments and foreign nationals.” In a statement, the agency said the programs were classified to stop adversaries from compromising them.

The agency also said it kept members of congressional oversight committees “fully and currently informed of its classified activities related to these two programs.” “In the course of any law-

ful collection, CIA may incidentally acquire information about Americans who are in contact with foreign nationals,” the agency statement said. “When the CIA acquires information about Americans, it safeguards that information in accordance with procedures approved by the Attorney General, which restrict the CIA’s ability to collect, retain, use, and disseminate the information.” The CIA released a series of redacted recommendations about the program is-

sued by an oversight panel known as the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. According to the document, a pop-up box warns CIA analysts using the program that seeking any information about U.S. citizens or others covered by privacy laws requires a foreign intelligence purpose.

“However, analysts are not required to memorialize the justification for their queries,” the board said.

Additional documents released Thursday also revealed limited details about a program to collect financial data against the Islamic State. That program also has incidentally snared some records held by Americans.

Both Wyden and Heinrich have long pushed for more transparency from the intelligence agencies. Nearly a decade ago, a question Wyden posed to the nation’s spy chief presaged critical revelations about the NSA’s mass-surveillance programs.

In 2013, Wyden asked then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper if the NSA collected “any type of data at all on millions or hundreds of millions of Americans.” Clapper initially responded, “No.” He later said, “Not wittingly.” □

**Associated Press**

## Delay ahead for Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine for kids under 5

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**  
and **MATTHEW PERRONE**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. regulators on Friday put the brakes on their push to speed Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine to children under 5, creating major uncertainty about how soon the shots could become available. The Food and Drug Administration had urged Pfizer and its partner BioNTech to apply for authorization of extra-low doses of its vaccine for the youngest children before studies were even finished — citing the toll the omicron variant has taken on children.

Next week, FDA advisers were supposed to publicly debate if youngsters should

starting getting two shots before it’s clear if they’d actually need a third.

But Friday, the FDA reversed course and said it had become clear it needed to wait for data on how well that third shot works for this age group. Pfizer said in a statement that it expected the data by early April.

FDA’s vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said he hoped parents would understand that the decision to delay was part of the agency’s careful review and high scientific standards.

“We take our responsibility for reviewing these vaccines very seriously because we’re parents as well,” Marks told reporters during a teleconference.

Pfizer’s early data showed two of the extra-low doses were safe for kids under 5 and strong enough to give good protection to babies as young as 6 months. But once tots reached the preschool age — the 2- to 4-year-olds — two shots didn’t rev up enough immunity. And a study of a third dose isn’t finished yet — meaning the FDA was considering whether to authorize two shots for now with potentially a third cleared later, something highly unusual.

Friday, the FDA didn’t say exactly what new data Pfizer was providing except that it involved the critical issue of a third dose.

“We believe additional in-



A person is injected with her second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at a Dallas County Health and Human Services vaccination site in Dallas, Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021.

**Associated Press**

formation regarding evaluation of a third dose should be considered as part of our decision-making,” the agency said in a state-

ment.

The nation’s 18 million children under 5 are the only age group not yet eligible for vaccination. □



# Worker pleads guilty to abusing inmates at U.S. women's prison

By MICHAEL R. SISK and  
MICHAEL BALSAMO  
Associated Press

A former employee at a federal women's prison in California pleaded guilty Thursday to charges he sexually abused at least two inmates, the first conviction in a wave of arrests at a lockup known to prisoners and workers as "the rape club."

Ross Klinger, 36, is one of four employees, including the warden and chaplain, who've been arrested in the past seven months for sexually abusing inmates at the federal correctional institution in Dublin, California. Several other Dublin workers remain under investigation.

Klinger, a former Dublin prison recycling technician, pleaded guilty in federal court in Oakland to three counts of sexual abuse of a ward. He faces up to 15 years in prison, though in other cases the sentences have ranged from three months to two years. Klinger remains free pending sentencing. A status conference is scheduled for May 11. Klinger signed a plea agreement in connection with his guilty plea, but the document was not published to the public docket.



The Federal Correctional Institution is shown in Dublin, Calif., July 20, 2006.

Associated Press

A court official said it was sealed. Because the agreement is not public, it is not clear whether it includes a clause requiring him to cooperate with authorities. In a court filing last month, prosecutors said some of their evidence pertained to both Klinger and Warden Ray J. Garcia's cases. Klinger's lawyer, John Paul Reichmuth, declined comment.

An Associated Press investigation published this week found a permissive and toxic culture at the prison, enabling years of sexual

misconduct by predatory employees and cover-ups that have largely kept the abuse out of the public eye. FCI Dublin, about 21 miles (34 kilometers) east of Oakland, was opened in 1974. It was converted in 2012 to one of six women-only facilities in the federal prison system.

Klinger was arrested last June and accused of sexually abusing at least two inmates between March and September 2020, including inside a warehouse and in a shipping container on prison grounds while an-

other inmate acted as a lookout.

Klinger told the women he wanted to marry them and father their children, even proposing to one of them with a diamond ring after she was discharged to a halfway house, prosecutors said.

Another prisoner aware of the abuse reported Klinger to the Bureau of Prisons in June 2020, according to the FBI. Klinger was still allowed to transfer to a federal jail in San Diego months later.

After the transfer, prosecu-

tors said, Klinger kept contacting one of the victims through an email address he created with a phony name, sometimes sending lewd messages referencing sexual acts. He messaged the other woman on Snapchat, saying he loved her and was "willing to do anything" for her.

Interviewed by investigators in April 2021, Klinger denied any wrongdoing, but said that because of the allegations his life was over and that he was concerned about going to prison and being labeled as a sex offender. He was arrested two months later.

"Sexual misconduct of a ward, you can't come back from that," Klinger told investigators in the interview, according to court documents. He was placed on administrative leave at that time.

Another Dublin prison employee, chaplain James Theodore Highhouse, is scheduled to plead guilty Feb. 23 to charges he put his penis on an inmate's genitals, mouth and hand and masturbated in front of her in 2018 and 2019. Highhouse, 49, is also accused of lying to investigators when questioned about the abuse. □



This June 7, 2020, file booking photo from the Santa Cruz County, Calif., Sheriff's Office shows Steven Carrillo.

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A former U.S. Air Force staff

## Ex-Air Force sergeant pleads guilty to killing federal guard

sergeant and alleged member of the "boogaloo" extremist movement pleaded guilty Friday in the fatal shooting of a federal security officer in the San Francisco Bay Area amid large 2020 protests against police brutality. Steven Carrillo, 33, originally pleaded not guilty in July 2020 in the killing of David Patrick Underwood, who was shot on May 29, 2020, while he stood in a guard shack in front of a federal building in Oakland. He changed the plea at a federal court in San Francisco after federal prosecutors on Jan. 31 agreed not to seek the death penalty in the case. Prosecutors have said Carrillo, of Santa Cruz, had ties

to the "boogaloo" movement — a concept embraced by a loose network of gun enthusiasts and militia-style extremists. The group started in alt-right culture on the internet with the belief that there is an impending U.S. civil war, according to experts. Authorities accused Carrillo of fatally shooting Underwood after spraying a guard shack he was in with bullets from a white van. Prosecutors said Robert Alvin Justus Jr., of Millbrae, drove the van.

The pair is accused of driving to Oakland and taking advantage of the distraction afforded by people marching through the city's downtown to protest

George Floyd's killing by a police officer in Minneapolis.

A week after the shooting in Oakland, Carrillo allegedly ambushed sheriff's deputies in Santa Cruz County who were responding to a report of a van containing firearms and bomb-making materials. Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller, 38, was killed and several other law enforcement officials were wounded, according to authorities and court records.

Prosecutors in Santa Cruz charged Carrillo with a slew of felonies, including murder and attempted murder in connection to that killing. Carrillo pleaded not guilty to Gutzwiller's killing. □



# Ontario declares an emergency over truck blockades in Canada

By **ROB GILLIES**

**Associated Press**

**TORONTO (AP)** — Ontario's premier declared a state of emergency Friday in reaction to the truck blockades in Ottawa and at the U.S. border and threatened heavy penalties against those who interfere with the free flow of goods and people.

Since Monday, scores of drivers protesting Canada's COVID-19 restrictions and venting their rage against liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have bottled up the Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor, Ontario, to Detroit, disrupting the auto industry on both sides of the border. Hundreds more truckers have paralyzed downtown Ottawa over the past two weeks.

Premier Doug Ford said he will convene the provincial cabinet on Saturday to urgently enact measures that make it "crystal clear" it is illegal to block critical infrastructure. Violators will face up to a year in prison and a maximum fine of \$100,000, he said.

"Let me be as clear as I can: There will be consequences for these actions, and they will be severe," Ford said. "This is a pivotal, pivotal moment for our nation." The measures will also provide additional authori-



**Truckers and supporters block the access leading from the Ambassador Bridge, linking Detroit and Windsor, as truckers and their supporters continue to protest against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions, in Windsor, Ontario, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

ty "to consider taking away the personal and commercial licenses of anyone who doesn't comply," according to the premier's office. Separately, the mayor of Windsor asked for an injunction Friday afternoon to try to break up the bridge blockade, as parts shortages caused by the protest forced General Motors, Ford, Toyota and Honda to close auto plants or cancel shifts. A judge began hearing evidence.

Federal, provincial and lo-

cal authorities have hesitated to forcibly remove the self-proclaimed Freedom Convoy protesters there and elsewhere around the country, reflecting apparently a lack of manpower by local police, Canada's reverence for free speech, and fear of violence. Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens warned earlier this week that some of the truckers are "willing to die."

But the political pressure to reopen the bridge appeared to be mounting

along with the economic toll. The Biden administration has urged Trudeau's government to end the blockade, and Michigan's governor likewise called for a quick resolution to the standoff.

The Ambassador Bridge is the busiest U.S.-Canadian border crossing, carrying 25% of all trade between the two countries. The standoff comes at a time when the auto industry is already struggling to maintain production in the

face of pandemic-induced shortages of computer chips and other supply-chain disruptions.

"American legislators are freaking out, and rightfully so," said Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. "Pressure is now being exerted by the White House on Trudeau to act more decisively."

The Freedom Convoy has been promoted and cheered on by many Fox News personalities and attracted support on the right from the likes of former President Donald Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

"This is an unprecedented demonstration. It has significant levels of fundraising, coordination and communication. They have command centers established here and across the country and beyond this country," embattled Ottawa Police Chief Peter Sloly said. On Friday, amid signs that authorities might be prepared to get tough, police in Windsor and Ottawa awaited reinforcements from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the federal police force.

Ottawa's mayor has asked for 1,800 additional police officers, which could nearly double the manpower available to the capital city's police force. □

# Burkina Faso's junta leader is declared president by council

By **SAM MEDNICK**

**Associated Press**

**OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)** — The leader of Burkina Faso's junta Lt. Col. Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba has been declared president this week, the West African country's Constitutional Council said in a statement.

Damiba is to be officially inaugurated on Feb. 16, military officials confirmed Friday, although his term as president is effective retroactively from Jan. 24, when soldiers overthrew the democratically elected former President Roch Marc Christian Kabore. Damiba has vowed to restore security to the conflict-rid-

dled nation, which is seeing a dramatic increase in attacks by jihadists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic

State group.

Since seizing power Damiba has swiftly appointed new military chiefs, sacked



**A man holds a portrait of Lt. Col. Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba who has taken the reins of Burkina Faso, in Ouagadougou, Jan. 25, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

local administrators and vowed to restore Burkina Faso to constitutional rule when the "conditions are right," he said in a televised address to the nation days after the coup.

Damiba has also met with politicians, including the former administration, civic organizations and representatives of the international community to explain his views and garner support.

Earlier this month, Damiba created a 15-person technical committee charged with proposing a timeline for a transitional government that will lead the country to elections. The committee is expected to

announce its proposal on how the country should return to democracy in a few weeks.

While the junta has so far received widespread support from people across Burkina Faso, the international community has condemned the coup. Burkina Faso has been suspended from the West African regional body known as ECOWAS as well as the African Union, which stopped short of imposing sanctions. Both those organizations are calling for a fast transition to constitutional rule and for Kabore to be released. The former president is still under house arrest in the capital, Ouagadougou. □



# U.S.-allied Syria Kurdish commander warns of growing IS threat

By HOGIR AL ABDO

Associated Press

**HASSAKEH, Syria (AP)** —

The Islamic State group is a growing threat in north-eastern Syria despite the killing of its leader in a U.S. commando operation last week, says the chief commander of the U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish-led force.

Mazloum Abdi, who heads the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, warned that IS fighters are still very much present in the wake of a deadly attack by the militants on a Syrian prison last month. That attack killed 121 fighters from the Syrian Kurdish-led force, he added.

"We are surrounded by the Islamic State," Abdi said in a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press on Thursday night. "We have said this many times. If we don't strive to fight IS now, they will spread again."

A tenuous calm has prevailed in the region since IS's spectacular Jan. 20 attack on Gweiran Prison, or al-Sinaa — a Kurdish-run facility in Syria's northeast where over 3,000 IS militants and young boys, mainly sons of IS fighters, were held.

The attack on the prison led to 10 days of fighting between U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters and IS militants that left nearly 500



**General Mazloum Abdi, the commander of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, speaks during an interview with the Associated Press in Hassakeh, Syria, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022.**

Associated Press

dead on both sides until the SDF brought the situation under control eventually.

Abdi said immediate security measures were taken to contain IS sleeper cells after the assault: faulty detention centers prone to similar attacks have been emptied, security sweeps are ongoing and curfews limit night-time movements. But, the threat remains, he warned.

The SDF assisted in the U.S. operation that killed IS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi in the northwestern Idlib region last week by facilitating passage and

logistics for the U.S., but did not participate with fighters on the ground.

"We provided safety and security for personnel who went in, that's all I can say," he said.

While IS morale may have taken a hit with al-Qurayshi's death, Abdi said he did not believe it would lead to the group's decline.

He said he shared blame for the prison attack — the biggest and bloodiest since IS lost the last sliver of territory it held in Syria in 2019, marking the end of its self-declared "caliphate" over large parts of Syria and

Iraq.

"We didn't execute our responsibilities well," Abdi says.

His fighters last year twice got intelligence that IS sleeper cells were planning to attack the prison, located in Hassakeh province, to free their comrades inside. One attack was even thwarted.

"There was intelligence before that they wanted to attack, and we took procedures, but then we failed," he said.

But he also blamed the international community, which he says should as-

sume responsibility for the thousands of foreign IS fighters held in prisons and camps overseen by the Syrian Kurdish-led forces.

Abdo said searches are now underway in 27 detention facilities housing IS detainees to identify security weaknesses. Three prisons have been emptied, their inmates scattered to different facilities.

Abdi declined to name the facilities, but said two were close to the Turkish frontier, where bombardment is frequent. Another was found to have similar shortcomings as in Gweiran, he added.

The prison attack also shone a light on the hundreds of minors — a mix of different nationalities and backgrounds — who had been holed up in the prison along with hardened IS adult detainees. The teens have since been moved to a new facility, separate from adults, but the conditions of their detention was criticized and described as "dire" in a recent visit by Bo Viktor Nylund, UNICEF's Syria representative.

Some of the boys were children when their parents plucked them from their own countries after they decided to join IS, others were born in Syria. Many attended IS-run schools where they were trained for combat. □



**Uyghurs and other members of the faithful pray during services at the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar in western China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, as seen during a government organized visit for foreign journalists on April 19, 2021.**

Associated Press

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

**GENEVA (AP)** — An annual report from the United Nations labor agency Friday highlighted the work conditions of Uyghurs and other

Muslim minorities in China's Xinjiang region, noting signs of "coercive measures" that deprive workers of free choice in selecting jobs. It also called on Beijing to provide more information

## U.N. labor agency cites concerns about China's Xinjiang region

about how it's respecting their rights. The report from an International Labor Organization committee of experts tasked with helping countries uphold their own international commitments emphasized the labor rights aspect of China's policies in the western Chinese region. Advocacy groups and Western governments, among others, have voiced human rights concerns over the treatment of the region's Muslims.

The 870-page report also chronicled an array of concerns about scores of countries that in effect

were urged to improve workplace and job conditions.

The 20-member committee of independent international experts cited the Chinese government's defense, given in a different report, of what it calls vocational training centers in Xinjiang. Beijing says the centers are intended to help improve economic conditions and defuse extremist violence in the region.

"The committee takes due note of the view expressed in the government's report that 'some forces recklessly

sensationalize the so-called "forced labor" issue in Xinjiang on various occasions,' adding that this is 'nothing but a downright lie, a dirty trick with ulterior motives,'" the International Labor Organization document states.

"The committee is bound to observe, however, that the employment situation of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China provides numerous indications of coercive measures, many of which arise from regulatory and policy documents," the ILO experts wrote. □



# As journalists die, Mexico defends its press protection plan

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO

Associated Press

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — Even as Mexicans lament the killings of five reporters, photographers and videographers in just six weeks, they wonder: How is this happening, despite a 10-year-old program that is meant to protect journalists?

Officials say the program — which works with local and federal authorities to provide journalists with alarms and, occasionally, bodyguards — has been successful in shielding some journalists.

But critics say it has failed in some cases, and there is general agreement that it cannot end the plague of anti-media violence in a country where corruption is endemic and criminals can avoid prosecution for attacks. Enrique Irazoque Palazuelos, head of the agency that administers the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, is adamant: “The mechanism, let there be no doubt, has saved lives.”

Irazoque points out that that out of the 140 defenders and journalists killed since December 2018, “only six people were in the mechanism.” Among those not enrolled: the most recent victim, Heber López, director of the online news site Noticias Web, shot to death Thursday in the southern state of Oaxaca.



A woman posts photos of murdered journalists during a national protest against the murder of journalists Lourdes Maldonado and freelance photojournalist Margarito Martínez in Mexico City, Jan. 25, 2022.

Associated Press

International organizations continue to consider the country as the most dangerous in the Western Hemisphere to practice journalism, and the Committee to Protect Journalists declared these six weeks the “deadliest for the Mexican press in over a decade.” Aside from López, the dead include:

—Reporter José Luis Gamboa, killed in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz on Jan. 10.

—Crime photographer Margarito Martínez, gunned down outside his Tijuana home on Jan. 17.

—Reporter Lourdes Maldo-

nado López, found shot to death inside her car in Tijuana on Jan. 23.

—Roberto Toledo, a camera operator and video editor for the online site Monitor Michoacan shot Jan. 31 as he prepared for an interview in the western state of Michoacan.

Before López’s death, Irazoque said the government counted 54 journalists murdered since the current administration took power in December 2018. According to its own analysis, the attacks come mainly from municipal authorities (40%) and organized crime (around 30%). Private

groups cite lower numbers, including the CPJ, which says 33 journalists have died.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has concentrated more on his grievances with the media than on the violence against reporters. On Friday, just a day after López’s death, he went on a half-hour rant against journalists who have criticized him. “How many of them are against me? The majority!” he thundered.

It was only in response to a reporter’s question at the end of the news conference that he described

López’s killing as “regrettable.” He said the protection mechanism “is being improved.” And in fact, there has been an increase in participation under his administration. Irazoque says it is because of the rise in violence in some regions and because the program has done a better job.

When López Obrador took over, there were 798 people enrolled, including human rights defenders and journalists. Currently, there are 1,518 people covered by the program, including 495 journalists.

Participants receive support, such as electronic devices or “panic buttons” to alert the authorities to any threat; surveillance systems in their homes; even bodyguards.

Irazoque said, the program has issued 1,300 electronic security devices. It has also assigned more than 200 bodyguards, and has established about 75 safe houses for those under its protection and their families. The program also has helped to reinforce security in some 400 homes.

Jan-Albert Hootsen, the CPJ’s representative in Mexico, agrees that the mechanism alone cannot resolve the issue of violence. The biggest problem, he told the AP, is that criminals often act with impunity; the only remedy, he said, was to improve the police and prosecutors. □

## Swiss group: Taliban make pledges on education, aid workers

**GENEVA (AP)** — Organizers of a closed-door conference in Switzerland attended by envoys from Afghanistan’s Taliban leadership said Friday that the delegation pledged to safeguard humanitarian aid workers, facilitate education for all Afghans, and to promote environmental protections. The humanitarian foundation Geneva Call invited a delegation to the Swiss city this week to discuss international aid, the safety of civilians, respect for health care, the landmines and

explosives left behind from decades of war in Afghanistan, and other issues.

The envoys, led by the Health Ministry under the Islamic emirate, also met with diplomats and groups like the World Health Organization and the International Committee for the Red Cross, which have their headquarters in Geneva.

After meeting with members of the Afghan delegation on Thursday, Raphael Naegeli, the head of the Asia-Pacific division of Switzerland’s Federal Depart-

ment of Foreign Affairs, said they “realized that they must take the first step” and had shown an interest “to create a dialogue with the international community.” Naegeli said Switzerland — like many countries — was looking for actions, not words, from the Taliban. A key question after the visit was whether the commitments made in Geneva would be applied in Afghanistan, he said.

Many rich Western countries that were longtime donors to Afghanistan under



A Taliban fighter gives his meal to boys outside the Interior Ministry, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022.

Associated Press

the internationally recognized government the Taliban ousted in August have demanded commitments

from the new leadership on issues like the protection of women’s rights and education for women and girls. □





**PALM BEACH —** After spearheading *The Kitchen Table* for five years, receiving notable recognitions in *USA Today*, *The Daily Meal* and earning the #1 spot on *TripAdvisor's* list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. *Infini*, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former *The Kitchen Table* space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish



Taste limitless possibilities at Infini, where Chef Urvin Croes and his team explores without boundaries and steps with both feet outside of the box to create his most sensational dishes yet. This meticulously designed restaurant located inside Blue Residences on scenic Eagle Beach is a chef's table concept with limited seating where diners are able to interact with the staff and other guests alike throughout the evening.

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## New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami." After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pescatarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

**"Without a great team, there is no great chef"**

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently returned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine



craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

**"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"**

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit [www.infiniaruba.com](http://www.infiniaruba.com) or call +297-699-3982. □





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Some regions require proof or certification of negative COVID-19 status before allowing people into or out of the country. With rules and guidelines varying greatly from country to country, the safest approach is to have recent proof you are COVID-19 negative before you get to the airport. Covid Test Center @ Paseo provides both PCR and Antigen type testing with results within hours; and both are accepted by the CDC.

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cated at the Paseo Herencia Mall in the heart of the Palm Beach Strip and right across from the Playa Linda and Holiday Inn hotels; only two doors from T.G.I. Friday's. We are open seven days a week, between 9 am and 9 pm. This gives you the choice to walk in when it better suits you. It can be at the start or at the end of your day. No appointment needed here.

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A PCR test costs \$75 and results are ready the next day, while Antigen test costs \$35 with same day results. If you are staying at an off-high-rise area property, you can benefit from the free parking our customers receive at the mall lot.).

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## Pediatrician: 'Aruban politics can tackle childhood obesity with Jump 18'

**By Melissa Stamper**  
**Caribisch Netwerk**  
**ORANJESTAD – How do you tackle obesity and overweight? It would help if the Aruban government invests in the pilot program against overweight and obesity 'Jump 18', says pediatrician Jamiu Busari. "The problem is more complicated than just unhealthy eating habits."**

Busari has been working at the hospital in Aruba for two years. This doctor also noticed that almost all children who came to a consultation with health problems were overweight or obese. Behind the Jump 18 project is a multidisciplinary team, which also consists of Aruban professionals. They give programs about nutrition and exercise, and they also conduct scientific research. For example, they look at how healthy the canteens of the schools in Aruba are. Among the children who participate in the program, the experts look at the blood values and physical changes.

### Local approach is important

Busari took the initiative

last year to start a prevention program. Together with Aruban professionals, he tries to tackle childhood obesity. "You cannot solve the obesity problem with just a weight loss program. The problem is more complicated than just unhealthy eating habits or me it is very important to use the Aruban strength and knowledge", he says. There are several reasons why many people in Aruba are overweight. According to the experts, it has to do with upbringing and cultural patterns, but social and economic factors also play a major role.

### Obesity: a culture problem?

"If you drive around the island you will see a lot of fast food chains thanks to tourism, but locals also eat there. You see large traffic jams on Friday evening at Wendy's, that too falls under the culture patterns. These are all issues that make it difficult for a parent to change," says Busari.

Last week a column was published in the Volkskrant that led to a lot of criticism among Arubans. The



problem surrounding overweight is also mainly related to the Aruban culture, says GP Danka Stuijver. Unjustified, says former journalist Ariën Rasmijn, among others. "Healthy food on the island is not only expensive, but also scarce. Ironically, fast food is also expensive," he writes. Project manager Amy van der Linden is convinced that money can be saved if the Aruban government participates in their project. If fewer people are overweight or obese, Aruba will have to spend less money on treating chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiovascular disease. Last year, the team calculated an indication of the annual cost savings thanks

to Jump 18. Based on the data from CBS (2020), a reduction of one percent would already save 205,424 florins. At five percent, that is 1,027,119 florins and with ten percent, more than 2 million (2,054,238) florins can be saved.

### 'Better insights for the children themselves'

Celine's (10) mother, Julisa Henriquez, sees good results for her daughter. "I think the government should welcome the program with open arms. This will soon be profitable, because these children continue in life with better insight. That's really important." The social aspects of the program are also an important inspiration to

continue with the program. For Celine, the program is also a fun way to exercise with other children.

Maurella Ras also says that she has seen a difference since her daughter Xadah signed up for the program. The whole family now looks at food and the amount of food differently.

### Waiting list

The project will run until May and a total of eighteen children are now taking part. There is already a waiting list for the next registration.

### Child obesity in Aruba

It has been known for years that obesity is the main public health problem affecting children and adolescents in Aruba. For example, from a report by Unicef from 2013. The figures from the health monitor of the same year also show that in 2010, 25.6 percent of girls and 17.8 percent of boys in kindergarten were overweight or obese. Among fifth-graders in elementary school, 43 percent of girls and 32.4 percent of boys were overweight or obese. □

## IWC Schaffhausen new pilot watches touch down in Aruba



**Swiss manufacturer IWC Schaffhausen and Shivas Gold and Gems hosted a cocktail on the rooftop of the Radisson Blue presenting its latest novelties.**

Guests were also able to experience an exclusive watchmaking master class hosted by the brand's watchmaker, Tryggvi Sigurbjörnsson.

IWC exhibited its new Big Pilot's Watch 43 and Pilot's Watch Chronograph 41 exclusively available at Shivas Jewelers Downtown and Palm Beach Plaza stores.

From left to right: Diego Barona, Andrea Schellmoser, Ricardo Wever, Marleen Llanes. □



## 7 ways small-business owners can save on taxes in 2022



This Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019 file photo shows part of a 1040 federal tax form printed from the Internal Revenue Service website, in Zelienople, Pa.

Associated Press

### By T. OREM of NerdWallet

Taxes are complex, and for small-business owners, freelancers and people with side gigs, they're even more complex — especially now, as filers reckon with the tax effects of small-business relief programs and rule changes.

But those new twists and turns can create some tax-saving opportunities, according to three tax pros. Here are seven things they say entrepreneurs and independent workers can do to lower their tax bills and their anxiety this filing season and in the year ahead.

#### 1. DON'T SWEAT THAT PPP MONEY

If your business received a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, and you qualified for forgiveness, the IRS generally doesn't consider the money part of your gross income. In addition, on your federal tax return, it's usually OK to deduct the

business expenses that you paid with the loan money. "The IRS has been clear," says Meredith Tucker, who leads the Entrepreneurial Services Group at accounting firm Kaufman Rossin in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

State-level tax rules may have a different stance on PPP taxability, however, so be sure to consult with a qualified tax pro.

#### 2. EAT UP

For 2021 and 2022, the business meals deduction is up from 50% to 100% if the food and beverages are from a restaurant. "That can include takeout and delivery. It doesn't have to be eaten on the premises," says Mark Luscombe, who is a federal tax analyst for Wolters Kluwer Tax & Accounting.

But make sure you're getting your business meals from a restaurant. "You can't get a deli tray from a grocery store and have it qualify," he adds.

#### 3. WATCH THAT ODOMETER

If you're self-employed, you can get a tax deduction for every mile you drive for business purposes. In 2021, the rate was 56 cents per mile, and in 2022, the rate rose to 58.5 cents per mile. That means a 20-mile trip to meet a client might score a deduction of about \$12 this tax year.

But don't guess here; the IRS may ask you to substantiate your mileage. "The important thing, especially if you don't have an exclusive vehicle used just for businesses, is to keep a log," Luscombe says.

#### 4. CAPITALIZE ON SPECIAL RETIREMENT OPTIONS

There are special tax breaks for retirement savings if you work for yourself. Solo 401(k)s, also called one-participant 401(k)s, are one example of IRS-blessed retirement accounts designed for self-employed people. They mimic many of the features of an employer-

sponsored 401(k), including being able to sock money away pretax.

SEP IRAs are another option, and you have more time to contribute — especially if you get a tax extension, Tucker says. "You can take the deduction on your 2021 taxes and not actually have to fund the retirement account until the extended due date of the return, which could be in September, October," she says.

#### 5. LOOK AT WHAT'S SITTING IN YOUR HOME OFFICE

The home office deduction is a popular way to get a tax break on rent, utilities and other house-related expenses, but a home office can produce other tax breaks, too. If you commandeered an old table, computer or chair in 2021 for your home office and you haven't already claimed it as a business expense, you may be able to deduct its current market value, says Sean DiMercurio, a certi-

fied public accountant at DiMercurio Advisors in Orlando, Florida.

For example, if you bought a laptop for \$3,000 two years ago and now it's worth \$1,250, you may be able to claim a \$1,250 deduction if you started using that laptop for your business this year, he says. "This is something that is often missed by this group of taxpayers and is completely allowed," DiMercurio says. Be sure you have the receipts or proof of the original purchase, he adds.

#### 6. GET READY NOW FOR NEW PAPERWORK IN 2022

Self-employed people already get a Form 1099-NEC from clients who pay them at least \$600 a year, but if those clients are using Venmo, PayPal or similar payment platform to send the money, another tax form may start showing up for 2022. "They're going to get a 1099-NEC from the person they did independent contractor work for, and then from the payment processor — if it was paid by credit card or some electronic means — they're also going to get a 1099-K for the same transaction," Luscombe says.

That means small-business owners will need to be extra organized in 2022. "It's going to be a lot more paper and sorting out — making sure you're not double-reporting income, too," he says.

#### 7. BE SERIOUS ABOUT BOOK-KEEPING

"If you're eating, sleeping, drinking or thinking about your business, chances are what you're doing is tax-deductible," DiMercurio says. Even a few cups of coffee can be tax-deductible under the right circumstances, and it can add up to big money in tax savings, he says.

But be sure to keep receipts and use accounting software so you have good records. Also, don't stretch the truth. Tax evasion is a felony. "If you can't make the argument for a deduction or a credit without laughing ... chances are it's not really a good one," Tucker says. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 37 Start of the  
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2-12

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-12 CRYPTOQUOTE

B K H B K Y Z X Y Z F M I W A I

S H T I P H M I W R B G P B G O I S

Q Y D D R K I P B H Z B K H B Y V H M I W

K G U H B I R N H Z A Q I P X Y Z F I Z

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Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE REASON THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR IS HARD IS BECAUSE IT'S SO CROWDED. — KIN HUBBARD



This image released by Netflix shows Julia Garner in a scene from "Inventing Anna."

Associated Press

## Julia Garner plays fake German heiress in 'Inventing Anna'

By ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Julia Garner admits to feeling "intimidated" when she met Anna Sorokin who posed as a German heiress in New York society named Anna Delvey and was later convicted of fraud.

Garner portrays Sorokin in the new Shonda Rhimes series for Netflix, "Inventing Anna," debuting Friday. What surprised Garner at that prison meeting? Sorokin was likable.

"I just really wanted to get her energy," said Garner. "What was coming across that I didn't expect was how bubbly she was, how charming."

Garner walked away with insight into just how Sorokin was able to pull off her schemes. "When I got out of that visit, I was like, 'Wow, that's why she was so close in getting everything that she wanted. And that's why those powerful people and just people in general just gravitated towards her."

... It made you conflicted. It was very strange."

"Inventing Anna" is based on a New York magazine article by Jessica Pressler, who is a producer on the project. In the series, six-time Emmy nominee Anna Chlumsky plays a reporter named Vivian who is chasing the story. What she ends up writing is Pressler's article. Laverne Cox, Alexis Floyd and Anthony Edwards portray people in her orbit. Arian Moayed plays Sorokin's attorney.

## Every song he made: Sting sells music catalog to Universal

By The Associated Press

Sting is selling his music catalog, including hits he made with the Police and as a solo artist, joining a chorus of stars who are cashing in with investors who see value in licensing their songs.

Universal said Thursday

that its music-publishing arm bought the catalog, including "Every Breath You Take," "Roxanne" and "Fields of Gold." Financial terms were not disclosed.

In recent months, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Stevie Nicks,

Neil Young and others who sold millions of albums to Baby Boomers have sold their recordings, songwriting catalogs or both. Buyers typically get the permanent right to use the artist's songs or recordings in commercials, movies, television shows and other formats. Prices are rarely disclosed, but music industry experts put Springsteen's sale to Sony Music Entertainment in December at \$550 million and Dylan's deal the same month with Universal Music Publishing Group at between \$300 million and \$500 million.

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24/7



## Koala declared endangered as disease, lost habitat take toll

**CANBERRA, Australia (AP)**

— Koalas were declared officially endangered Friday in eastern Australia as they fall prey to disease, lost habitat and other threats.

Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley downgraded their conservation status across the country's east coast, in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, on a recommendation by the government's Threatened Species Scientific Committee.

Earlier they had been listed as a vulnerable species.

Many koalas in Australia suffer from chlamydia. Koala populations in New South Wales have fallen by 33%-61% since 2001. In 2020, a parliamentary inquiry warned the species might become extinct before 2050 without urgent intervention.

The number of koalas in Queensland has fallen by half since 2001 due to drought, fires and deforestation. Some are killed in attacks by dogs, or run over on roads.

"Koalas have gone from no-listing to vulnerable to endangered within a decade. That is a shockingly fast decline," said Stuart Blanch, a conservation scientist with the World Wildlife Fund-Australia.

"Today's decision is welcome, but it won't stop koalas from sliding toward extinction unless it's accompanied by stronger laws and landholder incentives to protect their forest homes," he said.

The Australian Koala Foundation estimates that there are less than 100,000 Koalas



A young koala looks through eucalyptus leaves in a zoo in Duisburg, Germany, Friday, Sept. 28, 2018. Associated Press

left in the wild, possibly as few as 43,000. Summer brushfires in 2019-20 killed at least 6,400 of the animals, as rescuers worked desperately to save them and treat their injuries.

"There have been many pressures on the koala. The Black Summer fires, of course, was a tipping point. But we know the koala is vulnerable to climate change and to disease," Ley told reporters at the Blue Mountains on Friday. Ley said vaccines to prevent and treat chlamydia

among koalas, the use of drones to study them and restoration of habitat are ways to the government is helping protect the vulnerable marsupial.

The government contends that listing koalas as endangered will highlight and help address threats, while conservation groups argue more has to be done to prevent their extinction. The Australian Koala Foundation has called for legislation to protect them and curb land clearing and mining projects that are

wrecking their habitats. It says koalas also are in danger across Victoria and South Australia. □



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# No Olympic medal as Shaun White takes flight for final time

By **BERNIE WILSON**

AP Sports Writer

**BEIJING (AP)** — Shaun White's brilliant and transcendent Olympic career is over. It ended with a fall on his final run down the halfpipe, a heartfelt ovation from the crowd and then a tearful farewell to a sport he helped define.

A few mountains away, Mikaela Shiffrin finally made it all the way down the Alpine ski hill, finished ninth in super-G and then expressed relief.

There were no medals and different emotions Friday for two of the biggest American stars at the Beijing Olympics.

Shiffrin could have two more chances to become the first Alpine ski racer from the United States to win three Olympic golds across a career.

White, though, is finished. His fifth and final Olympics ended when he clipped the wall trying to land his second trick of his third run. Knowing it was over, he pulled off his helmet and acknowledged the crowd as he slowly rode the rest of the way down the halfpipe. Trying to win his fourth gold medal, he instead finished fourth.

"I'm not sad," White said, although he cried a few times, including during an interview with NBC when he struggled to keep his composure.

"I'm proud of what I put down," White said. "And I can't help but think if I would have hit the podium in third, I would have wanted second. And if I'd have gotten second, I would've wanted first. It's just the fighter in me, and I'm always hoping for more."

White came shredding into the Olympics 16 years ago, a teenager from a San Diego suburb nicknamed "The Flying Tomato" because of his shaggy mop of red hair. He won the gold medal at Turin and repeated in 2010 in Vancouver. After finishing fourth in Sochi, he was back on the top of the podium in 2018. Along the way he became a pop culture crossover. Now 35 and his hair well-



**United States' Shaun White waves in the halfpipe course after the men's halfpipe finals at the 2022 Winter Olympics, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022, in Zhangjiakou, China.**

coiffed, White had his legacy on display all around him in the Secret Garden Olympic halfpipe.

"I'm sure every single person who competed today looked up to him for a very long time," said bronze medalist Jan Scherrer of Switzerland. "It's a very cool moment."

The gold medalist, 23-year-old Ayuma Hirano of Japan, was one of them. He proved to be a worthy successor to White with an epic final run that included a trend-setting triple-cork, or three head-over-heels spins while twisting above the pipe, for a score of 96. "I hoped I could send a message to him by showing my ride to him," said Hirano, who grew up idolizing White.

## SHIFFRIN FINISHES

Mikaela Shiffrin made it across the finish line of The Rock course on the Alpine hill for the first time in three races in the Beijing Games. She placed ninth in the super-G, well off the pace set by gold medalist Lara Gut-Behrami of Switzerland.

"It's a really big relief to be here now in the finish, having skied a run well," Shiffrin

said. "I wasn't skiing safe or anything. But I also did get to the finish and that's really nice for my heart to know that it's not totally abandoning everything I thought I knew about the sport."

Her performance in the super-G came after she crashed out of the giant slalom on Monday and skidded out of the slalom on Wednesday, both races ending just a few seconds after she started.

Those were her best events and the ones in which she had won gold medals, the slalom at Sochi in 2014 and the giant slalom four years later at Pyeongchang. The 26-year-old from Colorado said she had felt emotionally fatigued.

"But when we got out today, I just feel a little bit more settled. A little bit quieter. Trying to keep some calmness and just trying to focus on the task at hand, so I could put my attention where I wanted and ski the hill and the course properly."

Shiffrin could compete twice more individually in Beijing. She'll have a few days to practice the downhill and decide if she'll enter

that race on Tuesday.

## 'NO WAR' SIGN

Ukrainian skeleton athlete Vladyslav Heraskevych held up a small sign that read "No War in Ukraine" at the end of his third run.

The sign was printed on a blue-and-yellow piece of paper, the colors of Ukraine's flag.

It is possible the International Olympic Committee could consider Heraskevych's act a violation of Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits political demonstrations or propaganda during the games. But it also could fall into a gray area since the sign did not explicitly disrespect an opponent or criticize any political target.

Heraskevych finished 18th in a competition ultimately won by Germany's Christopher Grotheer.

## VALIEVA'S DOPING CASE

Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva's right to compete in the women's event will be decided at an urgent hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Both the World Anti-Doping Agency and the International Testing Agency — on behalf of the IOC — said

Friday they would fight the decision by Russia's anti-doping agency to allow the 15-year-old Valieva to skate in the competition starting Tuesday. The Russian agency provisionally banned Valieva on Tuesday because she failed a doping test in December. After an appeal, the agency lifted the ban Wednesday.

Valieva is the heavy favorite after setting world-record scores this season and landing the first quad jump by a woman at an Olympics when the Russian athletes competing as ROC, short for Russian Olympic Committee, won the team event Monday. The ROC said it will fight to keep that gold medal.

## WOMEN'S HOCKEY

The U.S. women's hockey team avoided an upset when it rallied to beat the Czech Republic 4-1 in the quarterfinals. Lee Stecklein scored the go-ahead goal on a shot from the right point 6:49 into the third period for the defending Olympic champions.

The Americans continue to struggle offensively. They needed 59 shots to score their four goals. Hilary Knight had a goal and assist, and Savannah Harmon and Kendall Coyne Schofield also scored.

## VAN DER POEL DOUBLES UP

Nils van der Poel of Sweden broke his own world record and won his second gold medal of the Beijing Games in the 10,000 meters, the longest race in the Olympic program. He added it to his victory in the 5,000.

His time of 12 minutes, 30.74 seconds broke his own world record of 12:32.95 set a year ago and was more than 9 seconds ahead of the Olympic record set four years ago by reigning champion Ted-Jan Bloemen of Canada.

## SHORT TRACK

Suzanne Schulting of the Netherlands successfully defended her title in 1,000-meter short track speedskating in 1 minute, 28.391 seconds. She set the world and Olympic records of 1:26.514 in the quarterfinals. □



## Bengals seek 1st Super Bowl title versus Rams

By The Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES RAMS (15-5) vs. CINCINNATI (13-7)** at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California Sunday, 6:30 p.m. ET, NBC

**BETTING LINE:** Rams by 4, according to FanDuel SportsBook.

**AGAINST THE SPREAD:** Rams 8-9; Bengals 10-7.

**SERIES RECORD:** Bengals lead 8-6.

**LAST MEETING:** Rams beat Bengals 24-10 on Oct. 27, 2019, in London.

**LAST GAME:** Rams beat 49ers 20-17; Bengals beat Chiefs 27-24, OT.

**RAMS OFFENSE: OVERALL** (9), RUSH (25), PASS (5), SCORING (17)

**RAMS DEFENSE: OVERALL** (17), RUSH (6), PASS (22), SCORING (15)

**BENGALS OFFENSE: OVERALL** (13), RUSH (23), PASS (7), SCORING (7)

**BENGALS DEFENSE: OVERALL** (18), RUSH (5), PASS (26), SCORING (17)

**TURNOVER DIFFERENTIAL:** Rams plus-2, Bengals 0.

**RAMS PLAYER TO WATCH:** DT Aaron Donald. The game's most dominant defensive player over the last eight seasons gets another chance to shine on the big stage. Donald has 1 1/2 sacks and 16 pressures in three games this postseason but was unable to make a big impact in his first Super Bowl appearance three years ago. The 2021 unanimous All-Pro should have a better opportunity against an over-matched interior offensive line.

**BENGALS PLAYER TO WATCH:** QB Joe Burrow. Burrow has gone from No. 1 overall pick to starting QB in the Super Bowl faster than anyone else by getting here in his second season. Burrow's presence has transformed a struggling franchise. Burrow has 15 TD passes and just two INTs in his last seven games, while averaging 331.1 yards passing per game.

**KEY MATCHUP:** Rams CB Jalen Ramsey vs. Bengals WR Ja'Marr Chase. The NFL's top cornerback faces off against the most productive rookie receiver since the merger

in a matchup that could determine the winner. Ramsey made his third All-Pro team after intercepting four passes and having 16 passes defended. Chase's 1,455 yards receiving in the regular season were the most for a rookie in the Super Bowl era and his seven receptions of at least 50 yards in the regular season and playoffs are tied for second most for any player in the past 30 seasons.

**KEY INJURIES:** Rams TE Tyler Higbee (knee) and T Joseph Noteboom (chest) are not expected to practice all week but haven't been ruled out for Sunday. ... Los Angeles RB Darrell Henderson (knee) and DL Sebastian Joseph-Day (pectoral) are expected to come off IR in time to play. ... Bengals TE C.J. Uzomah said he expects to play after leaving the AFC title game early with a knee in-



The Vince Lombardi Trophy is seen before NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell addresses the media at a news conference Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif.

Associated Press

jury. ... Cincinnati DT Josh Tupou (knee), OL Jackson Carman (back) and DE Cam Sample (groin) are also dealing with injuries.

met once under the current coaches with the Rams winning 24-10 at Wembley Stadium in London in 2019. ...

**SERIES NOTES:** The teams

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